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The Fern Hill Palace of the Maharajah of Mysore, Ootacamund, The Nilgiris, South India
August 21, 1959

Dear Lester:

JCW

How dare you be ill at the very moment I am writing you about how much vim-and-vigor there was in your last letter? Is that cooperation, chum? Stop it, now, please.

On the matter of what is a vignette, I had expected one of your usual brilliant, precise definitions, but I see you are as vague as I am on the subject, if possible. All right. I shall experiment and maybe we can find out, together, what a vignette is. I think it's " what is the most striking aspect of Indian life" which bothers me. The strangest thing about India is that it isn't strange; the strangeness is in us. But of course that's too esoteric except for a personal letter! Well, I'll try it next week or soon thereafter.

I hasten to send you this note because of what you said in your last paragraph: " I think an American institute in Asia would be a most useful affair and would serve as the kind of clearing house which is so sorely needed. If I can contribute any thoughts in that direction ,let me know." So I am letting you know: INDEED YOU CAN! First substitute the word "International" for "American" in what you have said above. It must be international, so that we can work with ALL countries - although of course, because American foundations and organizations are more plentiful and more active, much more is likely to be done with the USA, at least in the beginning. This, you realize, can only be done from a non-aligned country,which is India, naturally. We have to shoot for cooperation over the heads of the cold-war contingent everywhere. Anyway, PLEASE shoot me your thinking on this matter - even your hopes - as quickly as possible. HH is likely to take off for New Delhi to see Nehru any time after the first of September, and I'd like him to have your influence with him, partly because if the project here does develop, you should be involved one way or another. Tell us what, if you were directing such an office here, you would want it to do - and let's mesh it with our thinking here. RUSH, if possible.

And thank you for the encouragement on the book. More about that later on. I've been too busy to write a line since coming back up here August 1, and it looks like it will be some time before I can get back to it seriously. Meanwhile, your words give me courage to stick it out and finish it the way I know it should be done.

As ever thine,

Julie

Lester Markel
The New York Times
Times Square
New York 36, New York
USA

P.S. Tell Helen I saw her piece in a recent McCall's. Very bridish, so I gather matrimony is taking. Your girl must have more and faster and bigger experiences in this world; she can't go on forever NOT having honeymoons, yes? Love to her and Jack and Meta. JM

JCW: This is great news, his interest and approval. You remember he founded the International Press Institute (Headquarters, Zurich) single-handed; has vast influence with the Foundations, government, etc. Has been Sunday Editor of the NYTimes for over 30 years, and is on its Board of Directors. If he is with us in any way at all we will have enormous help and a free flow of practical ideas.

Julie

VASANTHA MAHAL,

MYSORE.

Friday morning
August 28, 1959

JCW, Your Highness:

In case you're looking for me for any reason, I have managed to snag a bed at Dr. and Mrs. Parpias. Address is 4th Cross Gokulam, Vani Vilas Mahalla . No telephone and no car so I'll have to get to the Conference by bus. My luggage and papers are buried in a store room at the Vasantha Mahal and I have no place to work, so I can't get the things I promised you on Sunday done until later. I'll be at the Conference all the time meanwhile, and will try to drop by Vasantha Mahal every day for mail and messages. I'll tell you later about the really fantastic experience I had yesterday with the bureaucracy when I arrived to find that the room I thought it was settled I was to have during the conference had not been held for me. I am sure you must have thought it was being saved for me too when you mentioned on Sunday about the crowd..otherwise surely you would have told me what to expect. I darned near had to sleep in the Park! It all seems funny now but I was furious enough on Wednesday to take off for the moon without even a formal goodbye!!

Hope I can see you Saturday, Sunday or Monday or thereabouts because it will have to be settled where I am to stay while I complete the work we have laid out for September. The Parpias have only a tiny house and I can't stay here very long - they've only taken me in because I was a temporary waif!!

Since Sunday I have shot out a lot of letters to American papers about possible stories on the Dasara, which will, of course, really be stories about you. I'll do the queryon the LIFE thing as soon as you get me settled somewhere where I can open my file trunks for the needed papers.

See you at the Conference.

Ever,

Julie Medlock

Saturday, August 29, 1959

Dear JCW:

If you think I am an ungrateful wretch for not being in touch with you since your return, note that I am in the clutches of The Bureaucracy - no names mentioned!! - and the note I left for you at Vasantha Mahal yesterday morning to be delivered to you immediately, was returned to me last night at the Parpias, along with a note for your mother. I hope this manages to reach you so you'll know where I am. Read yesterday's note for details. Please don't fuss about it JCW - I understand - but please let's have a talk the minute you can break free and can send for me. Im at the Conference all day.

Incidentally the Conference is quite interesting. Some VERY good minds, but also some real dopes around. Nikam is being a patient and efficient guiding force. Tell you more later.

Warm regards, as ever,

Julie Medlock

P.S. I don't know what you think of him or how well you know him, but my feeling is that IF we manage to get over all the obstacles and get an office or foundation or anything going here that the Yuvraj Karen Singh should be one of the people cooperating. If you think so too and it is strategic and possible you might mention to him what we've been thinking about. I think he has a Foundation and might be able to contribute - and also the fact that he is a good writer has a bearing.